



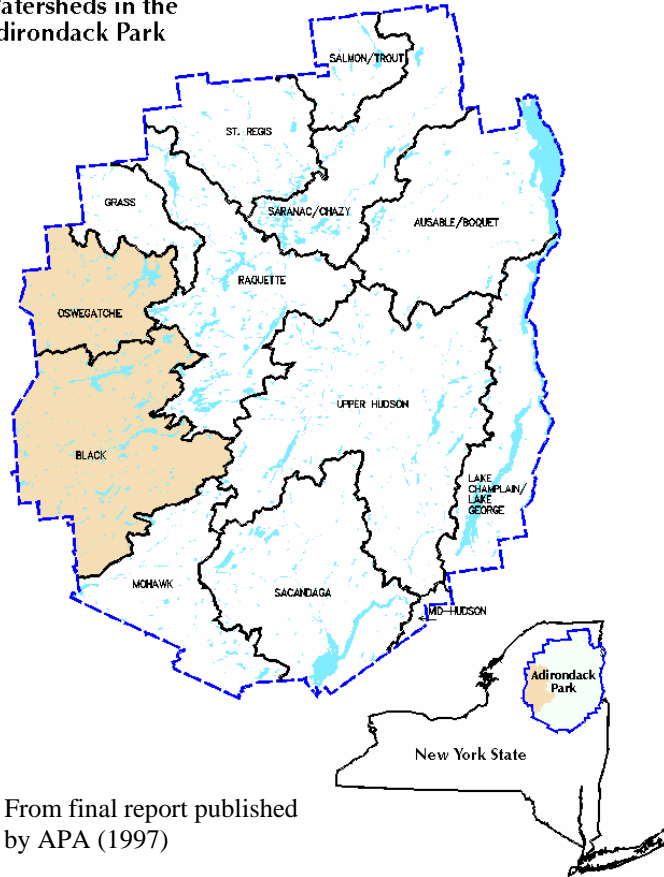
*From “Wetland Program Development Grants (WPDGs) Case Studies”  
Published October, 2006*

**Adirondack Park Agency:** *Working to map, classify and identify restoration needs for 900,000 acres of wetlands in New York’s Adirondack Park*

### **Introduction**

The Adirondack Park Agency (APA), a New York State government agency established in 1971, is entrusted with the very large task of overseeing private and public land use practices within New York’s Adirondack Park. This task can be daunting given the sheer size of the park. Adirondack Park covers nearly 6 million acres of land and is the largest publicly protected area in the contiguous United States. Roughly 40% of the park area is protected under the State constitution to “be forever kept as wild forest lands”, while the remaining 3.6 million acres is privately owned with a variety of recreational, residential and farming uses. Wetlands cover nearly 900,000 acres of the park and are a special feature worth preserving.

**Oswegatchie, Black and Other Major River Watersheds in the Adirondack Park**



\* From final report published by APA (1997)

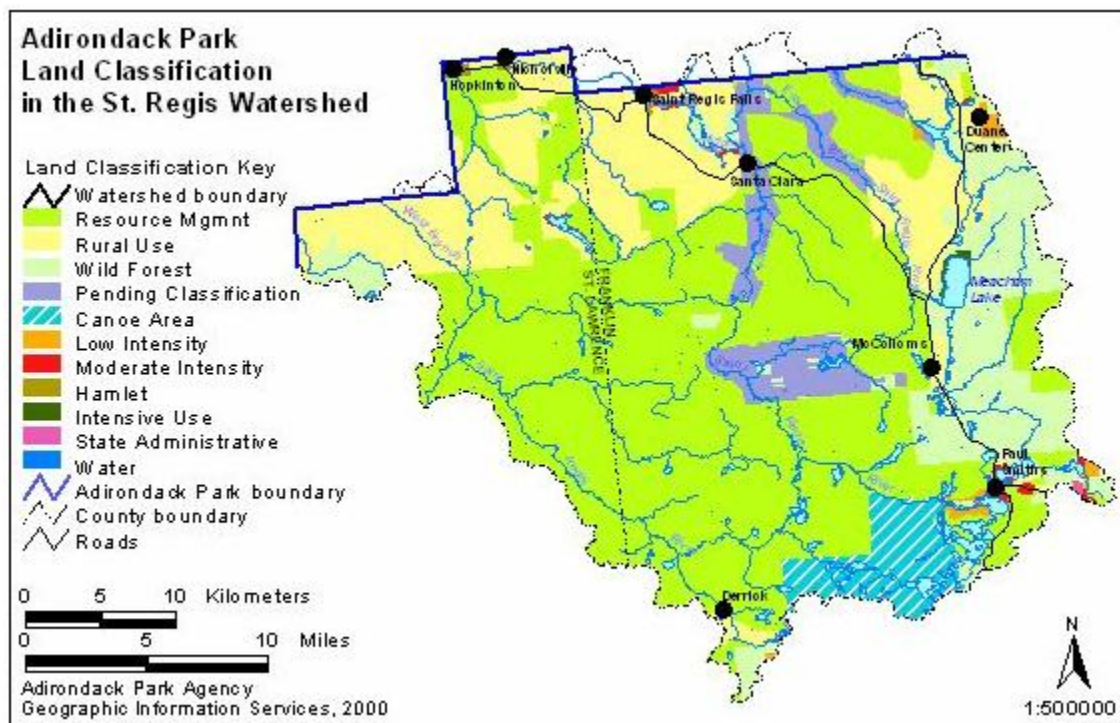
The Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan was developed in 1987 and revised in 2001 by APA and the Department of Environmental Conservation to provide a classification system and guidelines to direct land-use practices and preservation and management activities within the park. APA has utilized EPA Wetland Program Development Grants (WPDG) to aid in the long-term goals of the State Land Master Plan, in part by supporting efforts to inventory, classify and restore specific wetland areas within the park.

### **WPDG Activity**

A major area of focus for APA has been to classify and map all wetlands within the park. The large size of the park makes this task challenging but APA began efforts in 1993

with its first WPDG project entitled “Watershed Protection for Adirondack Wetlands: A Demonstration-Level GIS Characterization of Subcatchments of the Oswegatchie/Black River Watershed.” This grant enabled APA to begin mapping and analysis of Adirondack Park wetlands. APA utilized infrared photos and digital map overlay to increase image quality and detail. The project sought to determine the lower size threshold for identification of wetlands using available aerial photography and identify specific wetland types. It also represented the agency’s first effort to digitally overlay water and atmospheric chemistry data to collected wetlands area data. In subsequent years, APA used GIS to incorporate additional data layers on the physical and chemical properties of the watershed. GIS analysis of the composites may help uncover relationships that could potentially lead to more efficient restoration and management of wetland areas.

The GIS work in the Oswegatchie/Black River watershed provided a basis from which to shape projects in the other major watersheds of the Park. Work under subsequent grants focused on developing GIS layers and wetland data for the Salmon/Trout, St. Regis, Grass, Raquette, Ausable/Boquet, Upper Hudson and Mohawk Watersheds. These efforts have led to the development of reports that not only give information on the wetland coverage but also some detailed data on wetland types and function. For example, a 4-year mapping effort in the St. Regis Watershed yielded GIS layers that allowed APA to examine linkages between land uses, hydrography, wetlands and water quality (see map below).



\* From final report published by APA (2000)

### Current Work and Future Plans

The Adirondack Park Agency was awarded a grant under the 2005 EPA Environmental Outcome Wetland Demonstration Pilot (WDP) program to continue their sub-watershed digital mapping efforts in two additional watersheds of the Park.

For more information about the Adirondack Park Agency or the Park itself, please visit the APA website (<http://www.apa.state.ny.us/>).

References: New York State Constitution: Article XIV, §1

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